

WASHINGTON COUNTY

DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION FEES

As of February 1, 2020

Per PA Rule of Court 1910.4, the domestic relations section shall not require payment of a filing fee to commence or modify an action.

The statutorily authorized fees shall be added to cases and collected according to the PA Rule of Court 1910.17 regarding priority of payment distribution.

Fees applicable to support matters currently include:

- a. Judicial Computer Fee (JCF) - \$40.25, for new case filings
- b. Genetic Testing Fee - \$59.25 (\$19.25 per individual)
- c. Federally mandated user fees for qualifying cases

Unless authorized by statute, a judicial district shall not impose additional fees in actions for child support, spousal support and alimony pendente lite.

Exceptions hearings have no fee, however a \$50.00 deposit toward transcription costs of the court reporter is required. Any remaining transcription costs shall be paid prior to release of the transcripts to the parties.

Domestic Relations Section
Commonly Used Words

PLAINTIFF is the custodial parent or caretaker (for child support); the person receiving support.
DEFENDANT is the non-custodial parent (for child support); the person paying support.

CONFERENCE is the initial proceeding where guideline calculations are completed parties are encouraged to agree on the monthly support amount to be paid; paternity may also be acknowledged or established.

HEARING is a proceeding scheduled before the hearing officer, typically when an agreement is not reached at a conference. The hearing officer issues a recommendation which becomes final unless exceptions are filed.

EXCEPTIONS are filed if a party does not agree with a decision made by the hearing officer. Exceptions must be filed within 20 days.

MOTION is a request presented directly before a Judge.

MODIFICATION PETITION is a request filed by either party or counsel to change the terms of the current Court Order. Local rules apply.

ACCRUAL is a monthly charge. On the first of every month, the monthly amount is added as an accrual.

ARREARS are past due child support. Any payment in excess of the monthly support obligation will be paid toward the arrears.

WAGE ATTACHMENT/INCOME WITHHOLDING ORDER/GARNISHMENT are terms used when money is withheld from defendant's paycheck to pay support. The money is submitted to PA SCDU in Harrisburg then disbursed to plaintiff.

COMPLIANCE or COMPLY - to do what you have been asked or ordered to do. For example, paying support and/or providing health insurance for children as directed in a court order for support.

ENFORCEMENT is action taken against a party who is not in compliance with the terms of a Court Order. Some enforcement action is automated – credit bureau reporting, intercept of federal/state income tax refunds. Other enforcement action is initiated by the Domestic Relations Section, such as scheduling enforcement conferences and issuing petitions for contempt.

ENFORCEMENT CONFERENCE is a notice to meet with Domestic Relations Enforcement Officer in an attempt resolve the compliance issue without formal contempt proceedings.

CONTEMPT PROCEEDING is a proceeding which takes place when either party is not complying with the terms of the Court Order. The proceeding is held in front of a conference officer or support hearing officer.

BENCH WARRANT is a warrant for arrest issued when a party fails to appear for a scheduled court conference or hearing.